



## Crafting culture



Elise Redd hosted the first in a series of moccasin-making workshops sponsored by the Southern Ute Education Department on Thursday, March 1. The projects begin with buckskin and threadwork, and the final results will include traditional beadwork designs as participants finalize their cultural items. The event was the first of four workshops slated to take place in the Southern Ute Education Building.

photos Jeremy Wade Shockley/SU DRUM

## This is your language

'ícha-'ara m̥ni 'apaghapi 'ura-'ay

By Tom Givón  
Ute Language Program

### 3. The sounds and writing of Ute púupa-aqh núuchi po'o-ta-vaa-na

The sounds of a language – any language – are divided into two main groups: vowels and consonants. Vowels are open sounds, typically produced with the vocal chords vibrating and the airflow through the mouth relatively unobstructed. Consonant are typically produced with some obstruction of the air flow inside the mouth. We will deal first with Ute vowels.

Ute vowels are classified according to three features that, taken together, determine the shape of the oral tract during vowel production: (i) The **height** of the tongue; (ii) The **front-back** position of the tongue; and (iii) **lip rounding** or its absence. Ute has three **high** vowels, /i/, /u/ and /ɨ/; two **mid** vowels, /e/ and /o/, and one **low** vowel, /a/. Of these vowels, /i/ and /e/ are **front** vowels and /u/, /ɨ/ and /o/ are back vowels, and /a/ is a **central** vowel.

Finally, /u/, /o/ and /e/ are **rounded** vowels, while /i/, /a/ and /ɨ/ are **unrounded**. In the following space we will introduce each vowel as it is used in common Ute words.

/a/ low, central, unrounded; as in *mamachi* 'woman', '*áapachi* 'boy', *ta'wachi* 'man'  
/i/ high, front, unrounded; as in *mípuchi* 'small', *pítschi-u* 'children', *sí-gwanachi* 'hawk'  
/u/ high, back, rounded; as in *puku-n* 'my horse', *túu-kwarɨ* 'black', *chúuchi* 'pipe'  
/ɨ/ high, back, unrounded; as in '*ɨɨ* 'yes', '*tɨɨ* 'atɨ 'it's good', *tɨwɨpɨ* 'earth'  
/o/ mid, back, rounded; as in *toghoy-aqh* 'it's good', '*aqhotɨ* 'thick', *qhóqh* 'bull-snake'  
/e/ mid, front, rounded; as in *pə'e-y* 'writing', '*əəvi* 'bone', *pə'e'nichi* 'mound', 'low hill'

There are three additional features associated with Ute vowels: (i) **stress** ('accent'); (ii) vowel **length**; and (iii) **silencing**. Dealing with stress first, a Ute word must have one stressed vowel, either the first or the second vowel in the word. Second-vowel stress is by far most common, found in roughly 90 percent of all Ute words. First-vowel stress is much less common. We thus leave the common second-vowel stress unmarked, and mark only the lesscommon first-vowel stress. As illustrations consider:

#### first-vowel stress

tɨɨ-ate 'it's good'  
túu-gava 'black horse'  
'áapachi 'boy'  
pə'e 'road'  
'íi-pa 'this way'  
qhóqh 'bull-snake'

#### second-vowel stress

'ɨɨ 'yes'  
tuu-gava 'mean horse'  
na'achichi 'girl'  
'əəvi 'bone'  
'ipichi 'red clay'  
toghoy 'well'

The feature of vowel length ('double vowels') can be seen in many of the examples above. While vowel length does not often make a difference in meaning, it is an important feature of Ute pronunciation.

Finally, silent vowels, written with an underline, are a pervasive feature of both Ute pronunciation and Ute grammar. In general, on a subject noun the final vowel is silent, while on an object noun it is a fully-voiced. Thus compare:

mamachi 'áapachi pɨnikya-qha  
woman/SUBJ boy/OBJ see-PAST  
'The woman saw the boy'

'áapachi mamachi pɨnikya-qha  
boy/OBJ woman/SUBJ see-PAST  
'The boy saw the woman'

kúchu máa-pa pagha'ni  
buffalo/SUBJ that-way wandering  
'the buffalo is wandering that-a-way'

'áapachi kuchu pɨnikya  
boy/SUBJ buffalo/OBJ see  
'The boy sees the buffalo'

In the next column, we will talk about Ute consonant sounds. 'əvəsa-gha.

## Powwow Trails

**50th Annual Mul Chu Tha Fair and Powwow**  
March 17  
Bluebird • Sacaton, AZ  
Contact: Lena Rock  
Phone: 602-339-4777  
Email: lenarock@yahoo.com

**2nd Annual EPICS Benefit Powwow**  
March 23  
2600 Louisiana Blvd. NE • Albuquerque, NM  
Contact: RONALDA WARITO-TOME  
Phone: 505-767-6630  
Email: ronwartome@hotmail.com  
Web: www.epicsnm.org

**Denver March Powwow**  
March 23 – 25  
Denver Coliseum • Denver, CO  
Phone: 303-934-8045  
Email: denvermarchpowwow@comcast.net  
Web: www.denvermarchpowwow.org

**Hozhoni Days Powwow**  
March 30 – 31  
Whalen Gym, Fort Lewis College • Durango, CO  
Contact: Myra Britton  
Phone: 970-247-3251 or 970-247-7221  
Web: www.fortlewis.edu/hozhoni-days-powwow/home.aspx

**Spring Contest Powwow and Indian Art Market**  
April 20 – 22  
CSU Moby Arena, Elizabeth and Shields intersection • Fort Collins, CO  
Contact: Northern Colorado Intertribal Powwow Assoc.  
Phone: 970.498.0290 or ncipa@fortnet.org  
Web: www.fortnet.org/PowWow/NCIPA\_powwow.html

**Gathering of Nations Powwow**  
April 26 – 28  
University of New Mexico's University Arena • Albuquerque, NM  
Web: www.gatheringofnations.com

Come learn to read, write and speak

Ute!

Taught by Mr. Alden Naranjo, Tom Givon and Dr. Stacey Oberly.

Organized by Ms. Dedra White and Mr. Nathan Strong Elk.

# Ute Language 102

Wednesdays 5:30-7:30 pm  
Fridays 12:00-1:00 pm  
Jan. 18<sup>th</sup>-May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012  
Large Classroom  
Southern Ute Cultural Center and Museum

Beginners and community members are welcome!  
College credit available from Fort Lewis College or Adams State College.

Sponsored by the Southern Ute Cultural Department: (970) 563-0100 ext. 2306: soberly@southern-ute.nsn.us